Government have made one time additional allocation of Paraffin Wax Type-III to all Statas/UTs during the quarter October-December, 1991. The share of Kerala State in the additional allotment of Paraffin Wax Type-III is 157 MTs.

[*Translation*]

Raising on Age Limit for Civil Services Examination

3428. SHRI SURESH ANAND SWAMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are considering to raise the age limit for Civil Services Examination and also to remove the restriction on the number of attempts for appearing in this examination;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) to (c). The upper age limit for the Civil Services Examination is 28 years and the maximum number of attempts permitted at the examination is 4. However, for the 1992 examination it is proposed to fix the upper age limit at 33 years and the maximum number of attempts at 5, as a special case. This liberalisation will be admissible only for the 1992 Examination.

[*English*]

Extraction of Minerals from Indian Ocean

3429. SHRI RAM SHARAN YADAV:
SHRI DEVENDERA PRASAD YADAV:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any estimate has been made of various minerals lying in the bed of the Indian Ocean;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to get a survey conducted about these minerals and to extract the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Pioneer Area, which is located about 1,600 km. from Cape Comorin in the Indian Ocean, measures 150,000 sq. km. of this, we have to surrender half to the International Authority. The remaining half measuring 75,000 sq. km. has an estimated potential of about 380 million tonnes of polymetallic nodules. These nodules are estimated to contain 3.5 miiiion tonnes of Nickel, 3.2 million tonnes of Copper, 0.5 miiiion tonnes of Cobalt and 72 million tonnes of Manganese.

(c) Survey and Exploration for polymetallic nodules is already under way. There is also a programme of developing a deep seabed test mining system which is being implemented by the Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute, Durgapur, as the nodal Agency. The system would be progressively developed to a fully operational deep seabed mining system. Research and development on extractive metallurgy is also being conducted at the National Metallurgical Laboratory (Jamshedpur), Regional Research Laboratory (Bhuban eswar) and Hindustan Zinc Limited (Udaipur).

[*Translation*]

Pollution by Rawat Bhata Nuclear Power Plant

3430. SHRI SHIV SHARAN VERMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is great threat of environmental pollution by the Rawat Bhata Nuclear Power Plant; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to check the pollution there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The safety aspects of Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS) are constantly reviewed by a Multi tier system of review by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. The radioactivity releases into the environment from RAPS have been low and well below the limits stipulated by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. Radiation surveys and an analysis of water, soil, food, air and other food products collected have been systematically carried out in the area around the plant to ensure environmental safety.

Minimum Wages to Mica Industry Labourers

3431. SHRI CHHEDI PASWAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the minimum wages and facilities prescribed for the labourers (Government and Private) engaged in production and export of Mica in various States;

(b) whether these facilities and wages are being provided to the labourers of Bihar; and

(c) if not, the remedial steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR): (a) The Minimum rates of wages for different categories of workmen employed in Mica mines were revised on 25.10.1988. Special allowance linked with Consumer Price Index at interval of every six months, commencing from 1st October and 1st April is adjusted. A statement showing minimum rates ofwages fixed and special allowance payable from 1.10.1991 to the employees engaged in Mica mines is enclosed.

Welfare facilities provided under Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1946 include provision of medical, housing, drinking water, educational, recreation and family welfare facilities.

(b) As the Appropriate Government, the Central Government enforces the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act with a view to ensure the payment of minimum rates of wages all over the country including Bihar. The High Court of Patna, Ranchi Bench in the case of Suresh Kumar Jhanjhri Vs. Union of India and others (CWJ 164 1987 (R)) held that the scheduled employment of mica works do not cover mica mines and therefore, the notification issued by the Central Government fixing/revising the minimum rates of wages is not applicable to the employees engaged in mica mines. In view of this decision, the provisions of Minimum Wages Act and the minimum wages fixed by the Central Government coulo not be enforced in respect of the employees engaged in mica mines in the State of Bihar.

(c) The Government is contemplating to amend the scheduled employment, mentioned at Item 10 of Part I of the Schedulo to Minimum Wages Act so as to include mica mines also in the schedule of employment of mica works.